

"Fountain Flusher" Gets the Lead Out

One of the participating facilities invented the practice of a "Fountain Flusher." Every day, a different child is responsible for flushing the water fountains for 30 seconds each morning. This reduces lead levels in the water and teaches the children to take this action before they drink water at school, home and other places.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management believes that children deserve a safe place to learn and play. Because about 100,000 Hoosier children attend day care in more than 4,000 facilities, IDEM helped devise a way that providers with the highest commitment to environmental safety could be recognized.

IDEM's 5-Star program, which is completely voluntary, evaluates applicants based upon their efforts to reduce childrens' exposure to mercury, asbestos, radon, pesticides, carbon monoxide, lead and PCBs. Applicants must also address issues such as the cleaning and maintenance of their facility, proper employee training, energy efficiency, indoor and outdoor air quality, vehicle idling, recycling and environmental education.



For more information contact:
Indiana Department of
Environmental Management

(800) 988-7901

www.idem.IN.gov/childcare



Child care facilities that go
beyond basic **environmental**
health and
safety



What do you get when
you ask **child care providers,**
government officials,
doctors and **parents** to
come up with an idea on
how to recognize exemplary,
environmentally-safe
child care professionals?
In Indiana, you get
teamwork. And more
importantly, you get



Indiana's
5-Star Environmental
Recognition Program
for Child Care Facilities!

Good environmental stewardship starts early. And in Indiana, IDEM believes the earlier the better.

9 Steps for Success

Here are examples of some steps facilities take to earn recognition. (requirements very depending on the number of stars you'd like to receive).

☉ **Examples of how your facility** can earn “stars” include: changing fluorescent light bulbs, which contain mercury, when children are not present. Checking for lead paint. And conducting educational programs for parents on environmental issues.

Stars have been awarded to over 70 child care facilities — reaching an estimated 1,750 children!

☉ **Everyone wins** with Indiana's 5-Star Environmental Recognition program for Child Care Facilities. Child care providers are recognized for their hard work and can use their “stars” to promote their business. Parents go to work knowing their children are safe. And most importantly, children learn and play at safer, cleaner facilities.

1 Reduce exposure to MERCURY by:

- ★ Recycling fluorescent light bulbs.
- ★ Recycling mercury containing thermometers and replacing with mercury-free thermometers.
- ★ Identifying and labeling mercury-containing thermostats or replacing them with digital thermostats.

2 Reduce exposure to ASBESTOS by:

- ★ Inspecting for asbestos prior to renovation.

3 Find exposures to RADON by:

- ★ Performing radon tests.

4 Reduce exposure to PESTICIDES by:

- ★ Reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides.

5 Reduce ASTHMA incidences by:

- ★ Keeping pets out of classrooms or notifying parents when pets with fur are present at a facility.
- ★ Remediating areas where mold exists (e.g., replacing water damaged ceiling tiles, scrubbing moldy areas such as windowsills, etc.).
- ★ Implementing a no idling program to encourage parents not to idle vehicles in the facility parking lot.

- ★ Cleaning dirty air vents and setting up schedules for routine maintenance on changing furnace filters.
- ★ Notify parents about pets with fur or feathers at the facility.

6 Reduce exposure to CARBON MONOXIDE by:

- ★ Installing carbon monoxide alarms.

7 Reduce exposure to LEAD by:

- ★ Performing lead risk assessments to test water, soil, paint and dust for lead.
- ★ Encouraging parents to have children tested for lead.

8 Reduce HAZARDS by:

- ★ Developing written emergency plans for fires, tornadoes, hazard communication and blood borne exposure.
- ★ Becoming aware of chemical safety by training employees on the cleaning materials kept at the facility.

- ★ Checking for PCBs in transformers.
- ★ Recycling paper, plastic, glass and more.

9 Reduce ENERGY CONSUMPTION by:

- ★ Using energy efficient lighting.
- ★ Insulating hot water heaters.
- ★ Resetting room temperature when building is unoccupied.

Increased Awareness Leads to Better Understanding of Asthma

At several facilities participating in IDEM's 5-star program, up to 50 percent of the children have asthma. The 5-star program encourages child care providers to understand what triggers each child's asthma. Education of facility directors has had a “trickle down” effect. One of the participating facilities developed a “Pet Notice” that is now used by the 5-star program for facilities to notify parents about pets kept at the facility.

For more information about this program and how to become a 5-Star child care facility, go to www.idem.IN.gov/childcare or contact the Indiana Department of Environmental Management at **(800) 988-7901**.

